

Connecticut General Assembly  
Energy and Technology Committee  
February 28, 2008  
Testimony of Sharon Vocke in support of HB5596  
An Act Concerning the Right to Dry

My name is Sharon Vocke and I live at 373 Wedgewood Road in Southington. My house is in a neighborhood of large homes. When I bought my house five years ago, I discovered a covenant written in 1986 when the house was built which restricts the use of clotheslines. I'm sure the designers of this document were well-meaning people who wanted a nice-looking street with pretty houses and yards. The idea of laundry hanging out on a line may have reminded them of poorer neighborhoods of their youth when people hung out the wash to save money or because they didn't own a dryer.

We have entered a different era, however. Now we are aware that our choice to use electricity instead of sunshine affects our neighbors. When we choose to burn fossil fuels that cost money, drain our resources and pollute the air, we are harming ourselves and our friends. An electric clothes dryer uses about 1,800 kilo-watt hours per year and at about \$.18 a kW-hour it costs \$324 a year to run. That's something we all should have some choice about.

According to Governor Rell's onething website, in Connecticut, 53 percent of our electricity is generated by burning coal, 19 percent comes from natural gas, 14 percent from nuclear, 7 percent from petroleum, 2 percent from hydro and the balance is from other sources like wood, garbage, wind and solar. You can find this at [http://onethingct.com/energy\\_sources](http://onethingct.com/energy_sources) . Our hunger for electricity is creating big problems for us, so we need to try to use less of it.

In this country we are people who care deeply about each other and look for opportunities to help when we are aware of great need. I was amazed by the efforts of so many ordinary people after 9/11, hurricane Katrina, and after the Petit family tragedy in the town next to mine. In each of these disasters, people were desperate to help in any way they could. Connecticut people care. While not a sudden, catastrophic event, I am hearing more and more voices speaking out about our slower-burning climate crisis. Many people are taking action because they want to help this situation. I may be able to afford to run my dryer, but I choose to hang my clothes on the line because I care. I don't want to only look clean, I want to be clean, and so do plenty of others.

It takes me about 6 minutes to violate my neighborhood covenant and it's worth every second to have my clothes smell nice and to know I'm not harming the air we breathe. Plus, I have a few moments outside listening to the birds and looking at the sky before starting my busy day.

My laundry-filled clothesline is a banner that says, "I care!" Please pass HB5596 so that everyone has the right to dry!